

HILDA L. PATERSON

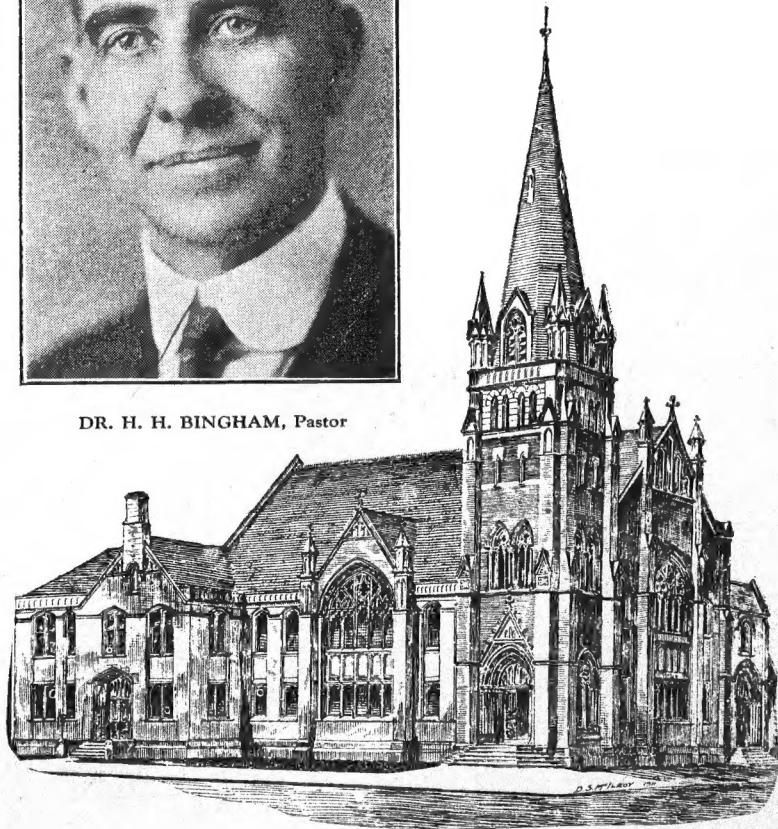
FORTY-FIRST ANNIVERSARY
AND
HISTORICAL RECORD
OF
First Baptist Church

CALGARY, Alberta, Canada

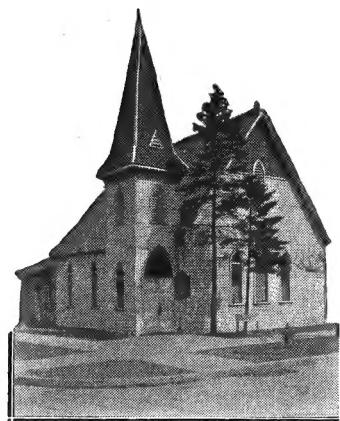


DR. H. H. BINGHAM, Pastor

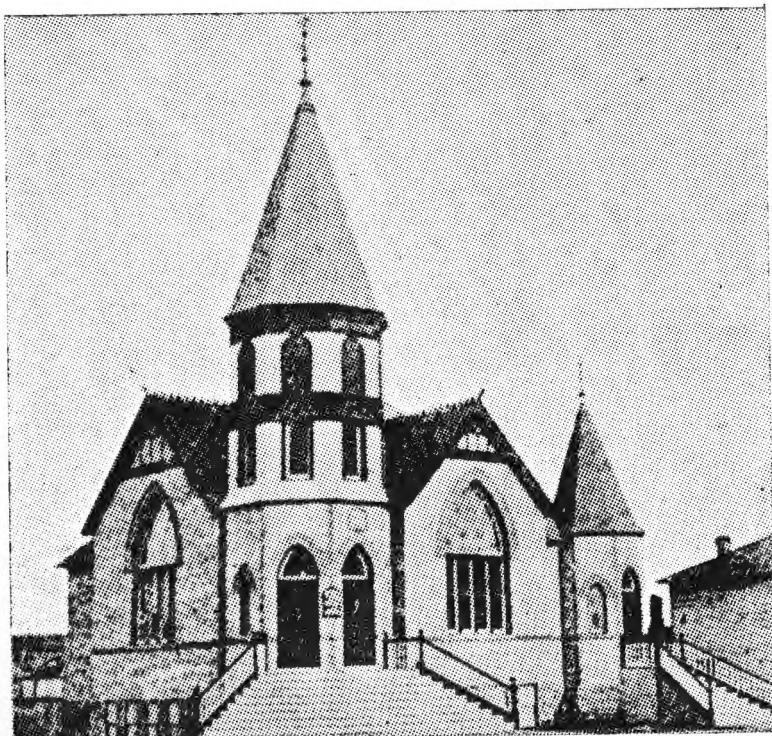
May 15th, 1888
— to —
May 15th, 1929



1912



1890



1900

8413

Pam
286
F745

Historical Record



HE First Baptist Church, Calgary, was organized on May 15th, 1888, in the home of Mr. and Mrs. E. King at eight o'clock in the evening by Mr. H. H. Stovel, editor of the Baptist Paper in Winnipeg.

The charter members were Mrs. George Constantine, Mr. and Mrs. E. King, Mr. and Mrs. J. B. Eschelmann, Mr. J. G. VanWart, and Mr. J. S. Povah—total 7. Mr. J. G. VanWart was chairman at the meeting. It was stated at this meeting that as far as was known there were sixteen Baptists in and around Calgary.

The first deacon elected was Mr. J. G. VanWart, the first church clerk was Mr. J. B. Eschelmann and the first treasurer was Mr. J. G. VanWart. The first prayer meeting was held on May 28th, 1888, in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Eschelmann. The first church service was held in the Masonic Hall on Sunday, July 22nd, 1888. The service was conducted by Mr. J. G. VanWart and Mr. J. B. Eschelmann. A memorandum on the Minutes states “the attendance was not all that could be desired.”

The first accounts paid were 60c. for Hymn books and \$3.50 for chairs. The first expenditure ordered by the Church was on September 4th, 1888, when the officers were ordered to purchase a two-light chandelier the cost not to exceed \$3.50, and also a broom and door mat not to cost too much. On December 4th, 1888, the officers were instructed to purchase a quarter of a ton of coal.

The first treasurer's report presented to the Church was on December 4th, 1888, showing total receipts for six months as follows:

62.10.24/91

| | |
|-------------------------|---------|
| Loose collections | \$18.95 |
| Envelopes | 18.25 |
| <hr/> | |
| | \$37.20 |
| Disbursements | \$21.70 |
| Balance on hand | 15.50 |
| <hr/> | |
| | \$37.20 |

The first Superintendent of Missions to visit this Church in Calgary was Rev. J. H. Best. It was on Sunday, December 16th, 1888, when the Church pledged itself to raise \$100.00 for the support of a student for the summer. Five new members were added to the Church on this date, and a standing vote of thanks was given to Mr. Best for his visit and preaching to them morning and evening.

The first meeting place was leased from Mr. G. C. King, brother of Mr. E. King—one of the charter members—on March 17th, 1889, being on the second floor over a warehouse on the corner of Seventh Avenue and First Street East, at a yearly rental of \$150.00.

The first student pastor was Mr. H. E. Wise. He preached his first sermon on May 19th, 1889. The first Sunday School was organized on the same date, and Mr. VanWart was elected superintendent. Mr. Arthur Bishop was elected treasurer. The first communion service was held on Sunday, June 16th, 1889.

The first motion made to collect the pastor's salary was made by Mrs. Eschelmann and seconded by Mrs. M. Freeze. A committee was appointed, and \$100.00 raised when Mr. Wise left for college on September 24th, 1889.

The first site for a Church building was given by the North West Land Company to the Trustees of the church on February 5th, 1889, being two lots on the corner of Sixth Avenue and Second Street West. At that time it was thought they were too far west.

The first ordained pastor was Rev. George Cross who preached his first sermon on May 3rd, 1889. His salary was \$800.00 per year, \$400.00 to be raised by the Church and \$400.00 of a grant from the Home

Mission Board, he to pay for his own house rent which was \$20.00 per month.

The first regular annual meeting was held on January 16th, 1890, with a tea prepared by the ladies before the meeting. The treasurer's report from the date of organization—19 months—was presented which showed receipts of \$323.36, disbursements \$321.21, balance on hand \$2.15. Number of members on the roll, 17.

The first steps taken for the building of a Church building and tenders authorized to be called for was on April 9th, 1890.

The first member baptized was Miss Laura Eschelmann, now Mrs. J. B. Paterson, which was in the Elbow River on May 25th, 1890. The first one to be baptized in the Church building was Mrs. T. Underwood on September 17th, 1890.

Mr. Arthur Bishop was re-elected treasurer of the Church on July 9th, 1890, and held office continuously until the end of 1927.

The new Church building was erected at a cost of \$2,065.90, and was opened for service by Rev. Alexander Grand of Winnipeg, on August 31st, 1890. The collections on that date were \$44.50

The first money raised for Missions, and sent to the Board, was in 1890, the amount being \$18.45.

A parsonage was built on the two lots next to the Church building. The lots cost \$650, the money being raised by the ladies of the Church. A building was erected, completed and ready for occupation in July, 1899. The cost of the building complete was \$1,770.00, making total cost of \$2,420.00.

The Church became self-supporting on January 1st, 1900.

Four lots were purchased on the corner of First Street West and Seventh Avenue, in 1899, at a cost of \$1,000.00. Seven men of the Church went to Molson's Bank and borrowed the full amount of the purchase price. The contract was let then for a

Church building in 1900 at a cost of \$9,000, making a total of \$10,000.

The first lots purchased for missions was in 1903, on the corner of Thirteenth Avenue and Second Street East—four lots costing \$800.00. This full amount was also raised by men of the Church from the Bank, and a building for a Sunday School was erected at a cost of \$662.53. The pastor's wife, Mrs. J. W. Litch, opened the first Sunday School, and the attendance was two little girls.

On February 19th, 1905, the Church building was destroyed by fire. While the fire was still burning the deacons had a meeting and decided to re-build, pledging at that meeting, including the pastor, \$1,500.00. Work started the next week, and the Church was re-opened in August, 1905, at a total cost of \$22,569.00. Also in this same year a new Church building was erected on the corner of Thirteen Avenue and Second Street East, and opened on May 28th, 1905, with an organized membership of 22 coming from First Church. The building cost \$2,250, so that the First Church built two church buildings in one year.

In March, 1906, two lots were purchased for a Church building in East Calgary, which is now Heath Baptist Church. The lots and building cost \$1,500.00. The Church was organized in June, 1907, with 13 members from First Church. This was the second mission started in Calgary.

In September, 1907, 31 members had their letters granted from First Church and organized Olivet Baptist Church at the corner of Fourteenth Avenue and Ninth Street West. This was the third mission.

On August 28th, 1908, 23 members had their letters granted from the Mother Church and organized Hillhurst Baptist Church, making the fourth mission.

On March 27th, 1909, fifteen members had their letters granted from the Mother Church to organize Crescent Heights Baptist Church. This was the fifth mission.

This missionary spirit came from a willing people, and especially from the Minister, Rev. F. W. Patterson, who after a great service to Western Canada in leading pastorates in Alberta and Manitoba, and as General Secretary of the Baptist Union—over twenty years in all—has been recalled to his native Province, Nova Scotia, where in the presidency of Acadia College he will render even greater service to Canadian Baptist effort.

In 1910 it was thought best to take advantage of the remarkable real estate activity in Calgary, and plans were made for moving from the business part of the city to the border of the residential section, with the result that seven men purchased eight lots on the corner of Thirteenth Avenue and Fourth Street West facing Central Park, for the sum of \$25,000 which they paid for in cash, borrowing the money again from the Bank.

It was a thrilling day, July 12th, 1911, when Dr. John Clifford, of London, England, after the close of the World's Baptist Congress in Philadelphia, laid the corner stone of the beautiful building here pictured. The ceremony was largely attended by Calgary citizens, and greetings were warmly given by Sister Denominations. In the evening Dr. Clifford lectured profoundly to one of the largest audiences ever gathered in Calgary, in Sherman Rink.

The church, with a seating capacity of 1,320, and the parsonage were erected at a total cost of \$152,131.89. The first parsonage erected on the old site, when the ladies were so energetic in getting the lots, was sold for \$17,000, and they bought the two lots on which the present parsonage stands, and built the beautiful home for the pastor which has never had a mortgage on it. The dedication ceremonies took place on May 12th, 1912. If one man more than any other felt great joy on that day, it must have been Mr. Thomas Underwood. Mr. Underwood, through all the years was absolutely devoted to the cause. He was converted in Baptist Faith in 1890, baptized in 1899 by Pastor Litch, and on the 1st of January, 1923, was made President of the Baptist Union of Western Canada, the most honoured gift of his brethren.

Since the opening of the work, the pastors and their dates of settlement have been:

| | |
|------------------------------------|------------------|
| Rev. H. E. Wise, student | May, 19th, 1889. |
| Rev. George Cross | Nov. 3rd, 1889. |
| Rev. H. E. Wise, second term | July 10th, 1892. |
| Rev. Matthew Gold | Oct. 28th, 1894. |
| Rev. T. P. Frost | Jan. 17th, 1896. |
| Rev. J. R. Cresswell | March 3rd, 1897. |
| Rev. J. W. Litch | Dec. 4th, 1897. |
| Rev. F. W. Patterson | Jan. 1st, 1905. |
| Rev. J. C. Sycamore | Oct. 3rd, 1909. |
| Rev. J. Austin Huntley | Aug. 15th, 1915. |
| Rev. H. H. Bingham, D.D. | March 1st, 1919. |

Today First Church, well appointed in every way, with over one thousand members, is leading the Baptists of Calgary in a great forward movement of the Kingdom. The Pastor, Dr. H. H. Bingham, preaches to the largest average Protestant congregation in the city. The service is not ornate, but direct and heart reaching, and souls are being saved continually. On Sunday evenings, in all kinds of weather the auditorium is filled to capacity. The people come because their soul longings are satisfied, whether in simple gospel song, or sublime hymn; whether in searching sermon or touching appeal to the unsaved during the after meetings always held. The Church, long known as the "Stranger's Sabbath Home," stands for Evangelical Ministry, Regenerate Membership, Religious Liberty, Church Equality and Biblical Authority.

The present Pastor and Mrs. Bingham are greatly beloved by the members of the Church, the citizens of Calgary, and all through Western Canada where his voice has been heard over the Radio and where he has lectured in many different places, especially in the small Churches, he is known and loved.

The following financial statement shows the amounts raised during the years for Church Work and Missions:

| Year | Members Rec'd. | Amount Raised | Building Fund | Missions | Sunday School | S. S. Missions | Ladies' Aid | Mission Circle |
|------|----------------|---------------|---------------|----------|---------------|----------------|-------------|----------------|
| 1889 | 17 | \$ 323.36 | ----- | \$ 18.45 | \$ 64.58 | ----- | ----- | 68.85 |
| 1890 | 18 | 1,891.48 | ----- | 26.85 | 87.55 | ----- | ----- | ----- |
| 1891 | 10 | 875.15 | ----- | 30.35 | 92.90 | \$ 25.60 | ----- | ----- |
| 1892 | 2 | 419.30 | ----- | 67.00 | 87.50 | 8.10 | 212.40 | ----- |
| 1893 | 28 | 1,055.65 | ----- | 15.15 | 48.00 | 18.70 | 10.20 | ----- |
| 1894 | 8 | 678.00 | ----- | 34.45 | 38.43 | 12.30 | 57.75 | ----- |
| 1895 | 16 | 543.30 | ----- | ----- | 38.00 | 3.00 | 60.70 | ----- |
| 1896 | ----- | 728.72 | ----- | 36.20 | 41.90 | 5.00 | ----- | ----- |
| 1897 | 20 | 694.95 | ----- | ----- | 64.18 | 14.20 | 57.35 | ----- |
| 1898 | ----- | 758.88 | ----- | 40.00 | ----- | ----- | ----- | ----- |
| 1899 | ----- | 800.00 | ----- | 60.00 | 102.45 | ----- | 58.70 | ----- |
| 1900 | 43 | 4,903.85 | ----- | 150.00 | 159.15 | ----- | 132.65 | ----- |
| 1901 | 56 | 9,680.15 | ----- | 300.00 | 140.00 | 100.00 | 124.87 | ----- |
| 1902 | 40 | 3,000.00 | ----- | 400.00 | 130.00 | Nil | 10.00 | ----- |
| 1903 | 85 | 4,000.00 | ----- | 500.00 | 150.00 | Nil | 150.00 | ----- |
| 1904 | 50 | 4,500.00 | ----- | 300.00 | 125.00 | Nil | 160.00 | ----- |
| 1905 | 50 | 3,200.00 | ----- | 250.00 | 160.00 | Nil | 170.00 | ----- |
| 1906 | 77 | 3,000.00 | ----- | 300.00 | 170.00 | Nil | 150.00 | ----- |
| 1907 | 50 | 2,500.00 | ----- | 4,007.19 | 440.30 | 100.15 | 860.15 | ----- |
| 1908 | 159 | 6,657.71 | ----- | 2,253.85 | 311.40 | Nil | 580.00 | ----- |
| 1909 | 34 | 6,826.83 | ----- | 6,072.75 | 285.25 | 61.60 | 420.00 | ----- |
| 1910 | 95 | 12,600.85 | ----- | 5,210.10 | 471.35 | 84.00 | 270.00 | \$ 246.35 |
| 1911 | 129 | 14,931.72 | ----- | 5,755.50 | 431.41 | 103.50 | 345.85 | 379.20 |
| 1912 | 121 | 24,208.51 | ----- | ----- | ----- | ----- | ----- | ----- |

| Year | Members Rec'd. | Amount Raised | Building Fund | Missions | Sunday School | S. S. Missions | Ladies' Aid | Mission Circle |
|------|----------------|---------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|----------------|-------------|----------------|
| 1913 | 171 | 16,384.34 | ----- | 4,712.93 | 515.20 | 146.39 | 294.80 | 393.37 |
| 1914 | 125 | 10,293.79 | ----- | 4,510.79 | 600.00 | 203.73 | 320.00 | 446.50 |
| 1915 | 37 | 7,422.12 | ----- | 3,070.60 | 583.69 | 134.79 | 183.60 | 515.49 |
| 1916 | 86 | 9,081.32 | ----- | 3,178.22 | 436.84 | 203.00 | 528.33 | 533.44 |
| 1917 | 130 | 9,057.32 | ----- | 3,483.29 | 537.86 | 30.00 | 251.55 | 591.49 |
| 1918 | 61 | 15,471.86 | \$3,020.33 | 3,104.16 | 350.00 | 311.51 | 800.00 | 490.68 |
| 1919 | 96 | 13,384.62 | 2,205.15 | 3,705.89 | 759.24 | 383.56 | 813.19 | 672.71 |
| 1920 | 117 | 30,087.20 | 6,043.28 | 6,027.55 | 1,136.98 | 400.00 | 3,197.94 | 938.47 |
| 1921 | 125 | 24,996.29 | 864.51 | 5,857.21 | 1,410.87 | 599.82 | 958.44 | 1,023.35 |
| 1922 | 119 | 25,796.36 | Birthday | 5,492.39 | 1,411.40 | 662.65 | 2,664.41 | 1,241.88 |
| 1923 | 113 | 28,018.11 | 4,610.81 | 5,604.25 | 2,758.71 | 781.50 | 1,933.72 | 1,435.17 |
| 1924 | 114 | 28,451.17 | 4,157.75 | 6,244.62 | 2,956.52 | 714.48 | 778.44 | 1,475.52 |
| 1925 | 102 | 28,834.43 | 5,171.82 | 6,520.70 | 2,962.30 | 608.64 | 709.49 | 1,750.75 |
| 1926 | 129 | 30,194.92 | 5,221.19 | 6,870.72 | 2,396.16 | 697.07 | 641.10 | 2,045.28 |
| 1927 | 106 | 32,686.60 | 4,182.67 | 7,547.78 | 2,682.04 | 756.84 | 531.27 | 2,063.23 |
| 1928 | 153 | 35,127.23 | 4,589.23 | 7,878.10 | 2,987.72 | 700.00 | 624.88 | 2,035.54 |
| 1929 | ----- | ----- | 5,679.54 | ----- | ----- | ----- | ----- | ----- |
| | 2,892 | \$460,126.09 | \$45,746.28 | \$100,706.04 | \$28,124.88 | 8,140.22 | \$18,460.63 | \$18,278.42 |

This statement also shows the large amount raised under the pastorate of Dr. Bingham for clearing off all the old indebtedness, which at the time he came amounted to \$37,780.00, and this beautiful church building and parsonage today stand clear of debt. It is through his splendid leadership and the co-operation of the officers and members of the church in their free will gifts that this has been made possible.

We are very grateful to Almighty God both for our financial and spiritual blessings that He has bestowed upon us in the last forty-one years.

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